

Kiana Pilson

Miller Arts Dance Scholar

Spring 2020 Minigrant Proposal

### **Enhancing Dance Through Music**

As a dance scholar, I recognize that music is important to my discipline and that there are numerous qualities which both dance and music rely on – rhythm, timing, style, etc. While I do engage with music (mostly through singing and songwriting), I would be able to explore this more thoroughly if I learned to play an instrument. I am particularly passionate about learning to play the acoustic guitar, because I enjoy incorporating its sound into my dance pieces. However, I have not had the resources to purchase or learn to play guitar. Therefore, I am applying for a Miller Arts Minigrant to purchase, learn to play, and eventually compose with an acoustic guitar.

If my proposal is funded, I plan to begin lessons during this spring semester. While in-person lessons may not be possible for the foreseeable future, because of the threat of COVID-19, I have access to alternative digital options for instruction. I am currently in contact with the manager of Charlottesville's Music & Arts, who is establishing a way to provide online lessons for guitar students. Additionally, I am aware of a few independent instructors who give lessons through online platforms, should instruction with Music & Arts fall through. My hope is to receive preliminary lessons through one of these avenues until the fall of 2020. At this point, I would be able to regularly attend guitar lessons through UVA's music department.

Also after purchasing the guitar and needed materials, I plan to incorporate what I have learned in my dance education at UVA to my music. For instance, I am currently taking Dance Composition, where we consider the usage of time, intention, spatial awareness, and many other factors applicable to both dance and music. Through this class, I have been introduced to a non-traditional method of composition as used by the most recent Miller Arts dance guest artist, Netta Yerushalmy. In some of her work, she explores the randomization of music and movement in choreographing a piece. For instance, she will assign a particular dance pose or gesture to another specific note in a piece of music. Another method she uses is numbering each movement in an existing dance and then randomizing those numbers to create a new piece of choreography. Doing so allows her to complicate the relationship a dancer (and their audience) has to familiar movement and/or sound.

This exposure has sparked my interest in randomized composition and has prompted me to deepen my understanding of the relationship between music and dance. I believe that Yerushalmy's approach to dance choreography can be applied to music as well, helping me to complicate traditional notions around what music composition is and looks like. Furthermore, I am confident that a deeper exploration of music will open up more opportunities for my dance studies. My hope is to use what I have learned through UVA's dance program and what I will learn through an active engagement in UVA's music department to compose a non-traditional dance/guitar piece before I graduate. I know that pursuing music at a heightened level will provide me a fresh perspective to envision new possibilities in dance.

**Tentative Timeline:**

April – June 2020

- Purchase guitar and other need materials (listed in budget below)
- Register for and receive online music lessons
- Enroll in UVA guitar lessons for Fall of 2020

Fall 2020

- Take guitar lessons within UVA’s McIntire Department of Music:  
MUPF 2180 (0.5 credits and 30 minutes per week) or MUPF 2181 (1 credit and an hour per week)
- Enroll in additional music courses within UVA’s McIntire Department of Music  
Potential Choices include: Theory I (MUSI 3310), Musicianship I (MUSI 3332), Songwriting (MUSI 3370)

Spring 2021

- Continue to take guitar lessons through UVA’s McIntire Department of Music
- Begin taking additional music classes through UVA’s McIntire Department of Music
- Compose a piece of music and choreograph a dance piece to be performed together

**Proposed Budget:**

Yamaha FG800 Folk Acoustic Guitar.....	199.99
Dunlop 418P073 Tortex Standard 0.73mm Guitar Picks (12 pack).....	5.99
Snark SN5x Clip-On Tuner.....	11.95
WINGO Guitar Capo.....	8.99
Road Runner Boulevard II OM Acoustic Guitar Gig Bag.....	79.99
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SUBTOTAL.....	306.91
4.3% Sales Tax.....	13.20
One-Time Registration Fee for Lessons.....	30.00
Four Weekly Private Lessons.....(32.00 x 4) =	128.00
<b>TOTAL.....</b>	<b>478.11</b>

\*personal funds or other scholarships may be used to continue with lessons throughout the summer, to purchase additional guitar accessories, and to pay added tuition fees for private lessons through McIntire